



Center for Military Readiness — Policy Analysis —

June 2011

DoD Inspector General Exposes Improper Activities to Repeal the Law re Gays in the Military (Don't Ask, Don't Tell)

With White House "Spin" the Fix Was In — at Expense of the Troops

Executive Summary:

A previously-undisclosed investigation conducted by the Department of Defense Inspector General strongly suggests that the so-called Pentagon "study" of gays in the military in 2010 was a publicly-funded, pre-scripted production put on just for show. The 30-page, DoD IG report, completed on April 8, 2011, reveals improper activities and deception that misled members of Congress in order "to gain momentum in support of a legislative change during the 'lame duck' session of Congress following the November 2, 1010, elections." (DoD IG Report, p. 20)

In 2010 the Defense Department's Comprehensive Review Working Group (CRWG) commissioned an official survey of over 400,000 troops and families, and conducted scores of focus groups worldwide to seek opinions on the law usually called "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." Uniformed personnel who participated in good faith were led to believe that their opinions would be heard and respected. But as early as July 4, 2010, even before the official survey of troops began, CRWG Co-Chair and DoD General Counsel Jeh Johnson was seeking advice from a "former news anchor" on how to write the report's Executive Summary more "persuasively."

The [DoD IG report](#) concluded that someone who "had a strongly emotional attachment to the issue" and "likely a pro-repeal agenda" violated security rules and leaked misleading information to the *Washington Post*. On November 11, 2010, the *Post* published a highly-misleading story suggesting that "70%" of active-duty and reserve troops surveyed were not concerned about repeal of the law. The DoD did not correct the unauthorized "spin," which was widely publicized and cited on the floor during Senate debate. The ultimate result of this travesty was a rushed vote to repeal the law regarding homosexuals in the military, with delayed implementation, during the December 2010 lame-duck session of the 111th Congress.

Investigators interviewed 96 of 101 people with access, but stopped short of questioning five named White House officials who met to discuss the draft report on November 9—just before the carefully-spun leaked story appeared in the *Washington Post*. One of these was James Messina, Deputy Chief of Staff for President Obama and the designated "liaison" to LGBT activists. Messina, hailed by gay activists as an "unsung hero" in the drive to repeal the 1993 law, is now the campaign manager for President Obama's Chicago-based re-election effort.

The purpose of the contrived CRWG process was to neutralize military opposition to repeal of the law by manufacturing an *illusion* of support. The administration misused military personnel, funds, and facilities to help President Obama to deliver on political promises to gay activists at the expense of trusting troops who became unknowing props in the pro-repeal campaign. The 112th Congress should question White House officials who were not interviewed previously, and do everything possible to repair the damage done to our military.

A. Background and Overview

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates set up the Comprehensive Review Working Group to produce a report on ways to implement repeal of the 1993 law, Section 654, Title 10, USC, which states that homosexuals are not eligible to serve in the military.¹ At more than 100 focus group meetings with personnel and their and families, the Pentagon Working Group pretended to be “listening” to the troops' opinions on the law, mislabeled "Don't Ask, Don't Tell."

A previously-undisclosed investigation conducted by the Department of Defense Inspector General strongly suggests that the so-called Pentagon “study” of gays in the military in 2010 was pre-scripted and put on just for show. The 30-page, [DoD IG report](#), completed on April 8, 2011, reveals improper activities and deception that misled members of Congress in order “*to gain momentum*” for repeal of the 1993 law. (DoD IG Report, p. 20)²

The administration knew that support for the controversial gays-in-the-military cause would be difficult to find in the armed forces, particularly in the combat arms, so an unnamed Pentagon or White House official apparently released selected information from the DoD Working Group review of the issue in order to create an *illusion* of military support. According to the long-overdue DoD IG report, a “preponderance of witnesses” suggested that the source of a highly-misleading story leaked to the *Washington Post* had a personal agenda favoring repeal of the 1993 law usually called “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.”

The November 11, 2010, *Washington Post* story in question reported a misleading story suggesting that “70%” of active-duty troops surveyed by the Defense Department thought that the results of repealing the current law would be “*positive, mixed or nonexistent.*” Pentagon officials allowed that well-spun “money quote” to dominate the news for weeks, without correction, even though substantial survey findings to the contrary were in the actual report that the CRWG officially released on November 30.³

For example, the actual Defense Department survey found that about 60% of Army land combat troops and 67% of combat Marines said that repeal would undermine military effectiveness. Significant numbers of military personnel said they would decline re-enlistment if Congress repealed the 1993 law. And on many survey questions about admitted “thorny issues” such as the desire for personal privacy in sexual matters, negative responses were twice as large as positive ones. Surveys and focus groups did not even ask the most important question, “*Should the law be retained or repealed?*” Pentagon officials nevertheless allowed the media to repeat and publicize the *Washington Post* story as if the troops had endorsed repeal of the law.⁴

DoD IG investigators concluded that the premature, unauthorized release of information from the CRWG’s Executive Summary, which occurred a few days after a November 9, 2010, White House strategy meeting, was the result of a “leak” from an insider source who “*had a likely pro-repeal agenda.*” (DoD IG Report, pp. 20-21)⁵ Since none of the Pentagon civilian or military people with access to the tightly-controlled report draft admitted to being the source of the leak, investigation findings pointed like a bloodhound directly to the White House.

The DoD IG did not explain why investigators failed to interview or check the e-mail of the most likely suspects in the matter: five named White House officials with exposure to the draft report on November 9, 2010. (DoD IG Report, p. 5) One of these was James Messina, who was

President Obama's Deputy Chief of Staff and primary White House liaison to the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered) community.

Weeks before the *Washington Post* misled Congress and skewed public perceptions, LGBT activists were criticizing James Messina for not doing enough to repeal the 1993 law. Efforts to pass the repeal bill failed in the Senate on September 21 and again on December 9. Everything changed when several Republican senators went back on their word in the December lame-duck session. "Privileged" legislation to repeal the law mislabeled "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" (Section 654, Title 10, U.S.C.), with "delayed implementation," was rammed through the Senate on December 18, 2010.⁶

Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese praised Messina as "*one of the great unsung heroes*" of the gays-in-the-military campaign. According to the left-wing *Nation* magazine, Messina "*touted repeal [of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"] as a major victory for the administration and an example of Obama's commitment to his [LGBT] base.*"⁷ In January Messina left the White House to manage Obama's Chicago-based re-election campaign.

The DoD IG investigation revealed that countless hours that troops spent in focus groups were essentially a waste of their time. All of these diverted man-hours and efforts were directed to a single goal: finding or—as it turned out—*manufacturing* a media story that would create the illusion of strong (70%) military support for President Obama's LGBT political goals.

The DoD IG report confirmed what many observers suspected: The Obama Administration did not plan to survey and listen to the opinions of the troops, but to orchestrate an audacious "perception management" (PM) campaign to create what *appeared* to be military support for the president's plan to repeal the law on gays in the military. The publicly-funded travesty worked to deliver a political payoff to the President's most ardent constituency, the LGBT Left.

B. Key Findings and DoD IG Report Excerpts

1. Jeh Johnson Showed Pre-Scripted Executive Summary to Former News Anchor in July

After weeks of investigation, the DoD IG investigators concluded that the highly-publicized Executive Summary excerpt suggesting that that an overwhelming majority of troops surveyed were supportive or indifferent to repeal of the 1993 law was pre-scripted by CRWG Co-Chair Jeh Johnson as early as July 4, 2010. Johnson, who also serves as the Department of Defense General Counsel, invited a "*former news anchor*" to his home on the July 4 weekend to review an early draft of the CRWG report, and to discuss "*suggestions for persuasive writing.*"

This meeting, which violated the CRWG security plan and was not authorized by the Secretary of Defense, took place several days *before* the DoD survey of the troops ever began, and five months before an insider leaked the selected information to the *Washington Post*. (DoD IG, p. 5)

The unnamed former news anchor told the IG that he was struck by how many members of the United States Armed Services thought that repeal of the 1993 law was "just fine." The comment was peculiar, since the company contracted to do the survey (Westat) did not transmit the instrument electronically to almost 400,000 active-duty and reserve troops until July 7, 2010.⁸

The survey company did not gather, count, or analyze results received through August until the fall of 2010. Nevertheless, as the DoD IG reported:

“On or about July 4, 2010, three days before Service members received the CRWG ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell’ survey, **Mr. Johnson read portions of ‘an early draft’ of the executive summary of the draft Report to a former news anchor, a close personal friend visiting Mr. Johnson’s home.** As ‘a personal favor’ the news anchor provided advice regarding syntax, sentence structure, and suggestions for persuasive writing. Although the former news anchor could not recall all of the portions Mr. Johnson read aloud, the former news anchor testified, **‘I was very pleased that finally the United States was getting around to this idea [repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,’], and I was struck by how many members of the United States Armed Services thought this was just fine.’** We asked the former news anchor how he/she came to this conclusion regarding repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” The former news anchor replied that the information was in ‘one of the sentences I had a problem with in terms of sentence structure.’ We identified no evidence that the Secretary of Defense approved the sharing of information with this former news anchor.” (DoD IG Report, p. 5, emphasis added)

The revelation that CRWG Co-Chair Johnson was polishing his pro-repeal Executive Summary in July clearly indicates that the CRWG was going to claim repeal would have no negative impact—no matter what the official survey responses said. The DoD IG Report concluded that the defining Executive Summary of the CRWG report already was drafted—the only question was how to present it “persuasively.”

2. White House Strategy Meeting on Repeal

Jim Messina, then-White House Deputy Chief of Staff, was the administration’s designated liaison to gay activist groups. After the Senate blocked legislation to repeal the 1993 law in September 2010, most of the LGBT group leaders were highly critical of Messina’s unsuccessful efforts. The situation intensified when control of the House shifted to Republicans, making it unlikely that legislation would pass in 2010 or in the 112th Congress.

The DoD IG reported on a strategy meeting at the White House that immediately preceded the deceptive media leak that paved the way for legislative repeal:

“On November 9, 2010, Mr. Johnson and [Defense Secretary Special Assistant] Mr. [Robert] Rangel were invited, with Secretary of Defense approval, to attend a meeting at the White House regarding issues related to ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.’ Participants at the meeting included Mr. Denis McDonough, Deputy National Security Advisor; **Mr. Jim Messina,** Deputy White House Chief of Staff, Mr. Robert Bauer, White House Counsel; Ms. Kathy Ruemmler, Deputy White House Counsel; and Mr. Donald Verrilli, Jr., Associate White House Counsel. Mr. Johnson testified that he briefed them on the substance of the draft Report. Mr. Rangel testified that the meeting **‘was a broader discussion of more than just the [draft] Report and included topics related to the prospects for legislative action on repeal of ‘Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,’ and other broader discussion issues related to the overall CRWG process.’**” (IG Report, p. 13, emphasis added)

Starting on November 10, right after that White House meeting, the *Washington Post* began seeking confirmation of a leaked report based on the CRWG Executive Summary. The article

quickly became the defining story, even though it substantially misrepresented the concerns of military personnel.

3. *Washington Post* Publishes Story Based on Pentagon “Spin”

The DoD IG Report describes in detail how Greg Jaffe of the *Washington Post* sought DoD confirmation of a story obtained by his colleague, Ed O’Keefe, from an unnamed source claiming to have read the CRWG report.

As reported on p. 15, there were only three occasions when the report was briefed to officials, one of them being at the White House on November 9. The DoD IG interviewed attendees at the first two meetings when the draft report was discussed, but all denied that they were the source of the media leak. The five named White House officials who reviewed the draft report on November 9 also should have been interviewed, but the DoD IG excused them from questioning without explanation. (DoD IG Report, p. 13)

Specific survey data that did not fit the pre-scripted, pro-repeal template was not in the Executive Summary that Jeh Johnson wrote and shared with several unauthorized recipients before the official release of the report. Investigators noted that Mr. Johnson testified, “*as the chair of the working group and the author of the report, I felt I had a fair amount of discretion*” to reveal the report to several others without authorization. (DoD IG Report, p. 13) (Johnson’s practice of disregarding strict “non-disclosure” agreements and security measures showed poor leadership and an attitude that was inconsistent with claims that repeal would not change standards of conduct.)

Given this background, it is not surprising that the most significant results of the Working Group’s surveys of the troops were not reported in the *Washington Post*’s November 11 story, titled ["Sources: Pentagon Group Finds There is Minimal Risk to Lifting Gay Ban During War."](#) This is an excerpt:

“A Pentagon study group has concluded that the military can lift the ban on gays serving openly in uniform with only minimal and isolated incidents of risk to the current war efforts, according to two people familiar with a draft of the report ...More than 70 percent of respondents to a survey sent to active-duty and reserve troops over the summer said the effect of repealing the 'don't ask, don't tell' policy would be positive, mixed or nonexistent, said two sources familiar with the document. The survey results led the report's authors to conclude that objections to openly gay colleagues would drop once troops were able to live and serve alongside them.” (DoD IG Report, p. 15)⁹

The DoD IG Report noted that the *Washington Post* story closely reflected what was in the report’s Executive Summary:

“Based on the content and chronology of Mr. O’Keefe’s columns and e-mails from Mr. Jaffe and others, **we established the date that the first source began to speak ‘at length’ with Mr. O’Keefe regarding content from the draft Report to be either late November 8, or early on November 9, 2010.** Evidence suggested the second source probably became available to the *Washington Post* at about 3 pm on November 10, 2010.

“... We compared portions of *Washington Post's* article with the version of the draft Report distributed on November 4, 2010. All of the relevant facts in the article were contained in the executive summary of the draft Report. According to testimony, **Mr. [Jeh] Johnson was the primary author of the executive summary.**” (IG Report, p. 15)

The most significant findings in the DoD survey were buried in footnotes, appendices, or obscure tables posted on the survey website. The section of the CRWG Report disingenuously titled “What We Heard” did not provide quantitative data on the results of focus groups nationwide and overseas. Instead, the report disrespected the troops by reducing their opinions to a single sentence that did not appear in the Executive Summary: **“Our sense is that the majority of views expressed were against repeal.”** (p. 49, CRWG Report)

4. How the CRWG Managed Perceptions by Skewing Misleading News Story

As acknowledged by the DoD IG, the key to managing public perceptions was a single contrived question and answer suggesting that repeal would have little or no impact on our armed forces. This was the “money quote” that prevailed in most news coverage, almost completely overshadowing what servicemembers had actually said in their surveys or town hall meetings.

“Witnesses testified that the key leaked data point cited in the *Washington Post*, as well as other media outlets and politicians following the improper disclosure, was the survey statistic that ‘more than 70 percent of respondents ... said the effect of repealing the ‘Don't Ask, Don't Tell’ policy would be positive, mixed or nonexistent.’ According to one public affairs officer, ‘This 70 percent figure got everybody's attention.’ **We observed that the 70 percent figure reported in the media, while present in the draft Report's executive summary, was derived from just one of the 102 survey questions submitted to Service members.** The relevant survey question asked the following:

‘If ‘Don't Ask, Don't Tell’ is repealed and you are working with a Service member in your immediate unit who has said he or she is gay or lesbian, how, if at all, would it affect how Service members in your immediate unit work together to get the job done?’”

“The survey inquiry yielded the following responses:

Very Positively	6.6%
Positively	11.8%
Mixed	32.1%
Negatively	18.7%
Very Negatively	10.9%
No Effect	19.9%

(DoD IG Report, p. 15, emphasis added)

The DoD IG analysis is consistent with what the Center for Military Readiness, the Family Research Council, and other analysts not involved in the project were saying at the time: ¹⁰

“We noted that to reach the conclusion that 70 percent of respondents said repeal would have positive, mixed, or no effect on a unit's ability to work together to get a job done, the

CRWG combined four survey results categories to derive the 70 percent figure: Very Positively; Positively; Mixed; and No Effect. **If Mr. O'Keefe's and Mr. Jaffe's sources had desired to further an anti-repeal bias for the article, he/she could likewise have combined four results categories from that same survey question to conclude that '82 percent of respondents said the effect of repealing the 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' policy would be negative, mixed or no effect': Very Negatively; Negatively, Mixed, and No Effect. This evidence further supported testimony we obtained from a preponderance of witnesses that the *Washington Post* source(s) had a likely pro-repeal agenda.**" (DoD IG Report, p. 21, emphasis added)

5. A Pattern of Tolerating Media Misinformation

This was not the first time that CRWG Co-Chairman Jeh Johnson had allowed the media to write useful articles suggesting that the troops' opinions on that issue had been polled, and the results were positive or neutral toward repeal of the 1993 law. The DoD IG reported that the liberal Center for American Progress had asked the CRWG about a characterization of the DoD survey that the *Los Angeles Times* had reported on October 23, 2010. (DoD IG Report, p. 6)

Center for Military Readiness President Elaine Donnelly, together with Center for Security Policy President Frank Gaffney, sent emails to Jeh Johnson and a follow-up letter inquiring about a similar October 28 *Washington Post* report by Ed O'Keefe citing an earlier one on NBC *Nightly News*, titled ["Don't Ask Survey: Majority OK Serving With Openly Gay Troops, Sources Say."](#) The *Washington Post* article suggested that military troops were not opposed to repeal of the law. (DoD IG Report, pp. 6-7) In a private email response, Johnson described the story as "confused," but he did not issue any correction, allowing incorrect information to stand.¹¹

Since the first deception seemed to work well in October, someone with access to the report or its Executive Summary leaked another media spin story shortly after the November 9 White House meeting that discussed ways to get congressional action to repeal the 1993 law.

The *Washington Times* noticed a pattern of media leaks in a November 18 editorial:

"President Obama and his friends in the media want the public to think Americans serving in uniform are just fine and dandy with homosexual conduct in the military. This view is being spread through a series of selective leaks from the Pentagon's Comprehensive Review Working Group, which is putting the finishing touches on a report regarding the future of the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Mr. Obama has promised the fringe special-interest activists who helped him win the 2008 election that he will deliver what for them is the symbolic victory of opening barracks to lesbians, gays, bisexuals and the transgendered (LGBT).

".. To improve the odds, anonymous sources have been claiming to the administration's newsroom allies that 70 percent of troops wouldn't object to overturning the long-standing ban on homosexual conduct, citing draft versions of the Pentagon survey. The spin makes it sound as if the troops are fully behind Mr. Obama's campaign pledge. Those who know better say this reporting has created a false impression."¹²

6. Description of the Source

The Department of Defense Inspector General Report clearly indicates that someone within the Obama Administration used dishonest tactics and media manipulation to repress the voices of military people, especially close combat troops, and to ram through repeal of the 1993 law in December, before the new 112th Congress took office. The DoD IG Report is surprisingly frank on this point:

“Early evidence suggested that the primary source of the information was someone who had **a strong emotional attachment to the issue of furthering a repeal of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," and probably had ‘assumptions going in’ that the CRWG's findings would ultimately reveal that repeal would not be supported by a majority of Service members.** In addition, e-mails from the *Washington Post* reporters suggested that the source was not a "disinterested party," and other evidence showed **the source carefully disclosed specific survey data to support a pro-repeal agenda. We consider it likely that the primary source disclosed content from the draft Report with the intent to shape a pro-repeal perception of the draft Report prior to its release to gain momentum in support of a legislative change during the ‘lame duck’ session of Congress following the November 2, 2010, elections.**” (DoD IG Report, p. 20)

The source’s reported excuse for leaking half-truths, in order to skew public opinion weeks before the Pentagon released the actual 343 page CRWG report and implementation plan, betrayed how weak the prospects for repeal really were.¹³ Unfortunately for the troops, the perception management (PM) campaign worked to create a “reality” that did not exist, and laid the groundwork for an accelerated lame-duck vote for “privileged” legislation to repeal the 1993 law with delayed implementation.

The DoD IG Report noted the *Washington Post* reporters’ comments in the November 11 article, which described their primary source as one “*who has read the report in full (and) felt compelled to share information out of concern that groups opposed to ending the ban would mischaracterize the findings.*” (DoD IG Report, p. 15, emphasis added) This “motive” for prohibited action, if true, is a classic example of “projection:” falsely accusing others of actions and motivations that are the same or worse than one’s own.

C. Conclusion

The findings of the DoD Inspector General report are significant and deserving of further investigation. The tactics used by the persons responsible for the “improper disclosure” of misleading information have had serious consequences in the legislative process, for which our military will pay a high price.

During a December 2, 2010, Senate hearing, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said of the CRWG survey, “*In summary, a strong majority of those who answered the survey—more than two-thirds—do not object to gays and lesbians serving openly in uniform.*” And during the December 18 floor debate on repeal, newly-elected Delaware Senator Chris Coons cited the alleged DoD claim that “*70 percent of our troops believe a repeal of don’t ask, don’t tell will have little impact on military readiness or unit cohesion.*” (*Cong. Rec.*, p. S10659) The Senate had only superficial hearings on the CRWG report, and the House had no hearings at all.

Members of the 112th Congress should conduct a further investigation with immediate hearings that call as witnesses the five White House officials who were not interviewed by the DoD Inspector General. Members also should inform President Obama that they will not accept “certification” of a new LGBT Law and associated policies that required deception and dishonesty to pass.

Finally, the general public should consider whether the tactics used were a political payoff related to the 2008 campaign, or the re-election campaign in 2012. President Obama has misused the military to please civilian activists of the LGBT Left. Congress should hold the persons responsible accountable for their actions, and voters should elect a new Commander-in-Chief who is willing to repair the damage.

Endnotes

¹ Contrary to numerous descriptions of the CRWG process as a “study,” Gates directed the panel to produce a report on “how” and “when” to repeal the law, not “if” or “why.” Obama Administration leaders repeatedly said that the working group’s mission was to support the president’s plan to repeal the current law, but they allowed media to describe the project as a “study” that would serve to gauge military opinions on repeal of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” CRWG panel Co-Chairs Jeh Johnson and Army General Carter Ham invited CMR and several other organizations to meet with the panel in the Pentagon on March 4, 2010, and to participate in a telephone conference call on March 25, 2010. The CRWG panel extended the same opportunities to leaders of gay activist groups, such as the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN), the Michael D. Palm Center, the Center for American Progress and Servicemembers United, who reportedly met with the CRWG frequently.

² Department of Defense, [“Investigation of Improper Disclosure of For Official Use Only Information from the Comprehensive Review Working Group Draft Report,” report #10-117444-345, issued April 8, 2011.](#) On November 15 the American Forces Press Service reported that Defense Secretary Robert Gates had ordered the investigation on November 12, 2010. A report was due on December 1, 2010, but it was completed four months behind schedule—well after Congress voted to repeal the 1993 law. The DoD IG Report, marked “For Official Use Only,” was sent to the Center for Military Readiness by a source who prefers to remain anonymous.

³ Page 74 of the report indicated that “Nearly 60% of respondents in the Marine Corps and in Army combat arms said they believed there would be a negative impact on their unit’s effectiveness in this context; among Marine combat arms the number was 67%.” Cross-tabbed data displayed on the 2010 DADT Survey website indicated that among Army combat arms personnel, 21.4% would leave sooner than planned, and 14.6% would think about leaving—a total potential loss of more than a third (36%) of those valuable troops. ([DADT Survey Appendix J , p. J-53, Q-81](#)) Marine combat arms would be weakened even more, with 32% of Marines saying they would leave sooner than planned, and 16.2% considering an early end to their careers, totaling almost half. ([DADT Survey Appendix L , p. L-47, Q-81](#)) The gradual loss of even half as many combat troops and what the report described as “only 12%” of families likely to decline re-enlistment could put remaining troops in greater danger, and eventually *break* the All-Volunteer Force.

⁴ Pentagon leaders said that it would be inappropriate to poll the troops, failing to mention that the 1992 Presidential Commission on the Assignment of Women in the Armed Forces hired the Roper company to conduct a survey of active-duty military personnel on the issue of women in combat. The extensive survey, which was not controversial in itself, was useful but not considered definitive in the commission’s deliberations.

⁵ The DoD IG also quoted *Washington Post* reporters Ed O’Keefe and Greg Jaffe, who said in their article that their primary source was one who had read the report “(and) felt compelled to share information out of concern that groups opposed to ending the ban would mischaracterize the findings.” (p. 15) This suspicion was unfounded and not a valid excuse for leaking misleading information in order to “mischaracterize” findings in support of repeal.

⁶ Final repeal of the law would be implemented 60 days after President Obama, Secretary Gates, and Joint Chiefs Chairman Adm. Mike Mullen “certify” that repeal will not do harm our military. Gay activists expect “certification” to happen before or during the third White House celebration of June as “LGBT Equality” month.

⁷ Ari Berman, *The Nation*, [Jim Messina, Obama's Enforcer](#), March 30, 2011:

“With Messina as a **top liaison to the gay rights community**, the White House was reluctant to make repealing “don’t ask, don’t tell” (DADT) a key legislative priority...Groups that questioned Messina’s strategy, such as the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, were frozen out of key White House meetings. “I felt like he was constantly angry with those of us who would not fall in says Alex Nicholson, executive director of Servicemembers United (no relation to SLDN)....[Human Rights Campaign President Joe] Solmonese offered a different perspective, **calling Messina “unquestionably one of the great unsung heroes of DADT repeal.”** The two stood side by side on the Senate floor as the bill cleared the body on December 18. When the sixtieth vote came in, Solmonese said, Messina began to cry. After it was all over, Messina touted repeal as a major victory for the administration and **an example of Obama’s commitment to his base.**” (emphasis added)

⁸ The DoD IG does not mention the former anchor’s affiliation, but in an October 28 “Federal Eye” column, Ed O’Keefe quoted an October 27 NBC *Nightly News* report on the working group’s findings. The article, titled [“Don’t Ask Survey: Majority OK Serving With Openly Gay Troops, Sources Say,”](#) reported, “A Defense Department survey of military service members finds that a majority of them would not object to serving alongside openly gay troops...” O’Keefe also reported that President Obama met briefly with gay activists at the White House on Tuesday, October 26.

⁹ Greg Jaffe and Ed O’Keefe, the *Washington Post*, [“Sources: Pentagon Finds There is Minimal Risk to Lifting Gay Ban During War,”](#) November 11, 2010. The article first appeared on the web site late on November 10.

¹⁰ Preliminary analysis of CRWG survey instrument, the polling companyTM, inc./WomenTrend. Also see Peter Sprigg, Family Research Council Blog: [“Pentagon Report on Homosexual Policy Buries the Lead—The Majority of Views Expressed Were Against Repeal.”](#)

¹¹ In his October 30, 2010 email response to messages from Elaine Donnelly and Frank Gaffney, Johnson wrote: “I looked very closely at the stories...It seemed obvious to me that whoever spoke to the press was not very familiar with the actual results. The account of the survey presented was convoluted and confused, and it clearly did not come from someone who knew what they were talking about.” The Defense Department nevertheless allowed the false impressions to linger. “The full report will be made public for all to review early next month,” DoD spokesman Geoff Morrell said in a statement. “Until then, no one at the Pentagon will comment on its contents.” The CRWG knowingly tolerated more misinformation when the *Washington Post* story was published on November 11, 2010.

¹² *Washington Times* Editorial, [“Barack’s Brokeback Barracks,”](#) November 18, 2010.

¹³ On November 11, 2010, James Oliphant, David Cloud and Lisa Mascaro reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, “Chances of ‘Don’t Ask’ Repeal Fading in Congress.”

* * * * *

More information on this and related topics is available on the website of the Center for Military Readiness, www.cmrlink.org. CMR is an independent, non-partisan public policy organization, founded in 1993, which specializes in military/social issues.